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The Kingdom

Introduction

*The Kingdom* (2007) is based on a true story of an FBI investigation team who is sent into Saudi Arabia to respond to a terrorist suicide bombing which left the city in panic and paranoia. At first, the team is only authorized a few days in Saudi Arabia to show alliance between the Saudi and the American governments by offering their assistance in solving the mystery of the attack. However, as the team spends more time doing their work and battling with the red tape to crack the case, they find just how deep the rabbit hole goes. Not only do they have to track down the ones responsible for the attack, they must also watch their backs while they are surrounded by an environment where all they have to trust is each other.

Summary

Ronald Fleury (Jamie Foxx) receives a phone call while at his son’s school doing a presentation. The call is from his work, the FBI, commanding Fleury to report to his office as a recent situation is amounting in Riyha. Saudi terrorists have detonated a bomb right outside of an American building in the city, and Fleury is called into action to lead his team on the investigation of the attack. Once in Riyha, the team is faced with numerous troubles, as they receive little cooperation from the Saudi military in their investigation. Only after they gain the trust of Colonel Faris Al Ghazi (Ashraf Barhom) do they start making some headway in bringing justice on the terrorists. When the team tracks a small group of terrorists to a residence and neutralizes them, their commanding officers announce the mission to be successfully completed. However, on the trip to the airport, at suicide bomber driving a car detonates his explosives right in front of the SUV the team is riding in. As they try to recover from the confusion and the chaos, they realize that part of their convey was working against them. With one of their members taken hostage, the remainder of the team must track down the rest of the terrorists, and save their friend from imminent execution.

Understanding Middle East Society

One of the scenes that can help us get an understanding of the contemporary of Middle Eastern society is one of the last scenes when the team and Faris had eliminated the remainder of the terrorist group and they are waiting from backup in an apartment with a Muslim family. The team, having neutralized all apparent enemy, is finally calming down after some intense shootouts with the terrorists. But as they wait for back up in the apartment, the Muslim family pulls out weapons and Faris is shot in the head. The team is forced to kill 2 members of the family in order to secure the area. As the old Muslim man is dying, he whispers in his daughter’s ear, “Don’t worry my girl, we will kill them all.” I think this scene gives a good impression of the Middle Eastern society in the sense that, they live just like many Americans in modern homes, have families of their own, yet have an unfailing loyalty to their religion and their people.

Favorite Scene That Impacts My View

My favorite scene from the film that impacts my view of the Middle East is the scene when the team is going to investigate a building which they believe was part of the crime. They must battle with the red tape to even be granted the opportunity to investigate the off-site scene. However, once they arrive at the building, another Saudi officer opposes their advancement which had been approved. The officer becomes violent and hits Faris when their disagreement gets heated up. Another soldier starts firing a machine gun into the air in order to break up the hostility. This scene greatly impacted my view of the Middle East because it made me notice how corrupt their society really is. The soldiers/military, who is supposed to be protecting the people, only stand as an obstacle when someone is actually trying to help the people. Their system is problematic and only makes life for everyone worse.

Favorable Impressions

There are several scenes that give a favorable impression of the Middle East. The scene when the team arrives on-site of the bombing and the Saudi Prince comes to greet them in front of the press give a positive image of the Middle East. This scene shows how they are willing to cooperate with other countries and accept help when they are in need. This is very relevant considering the current state that the Middle East is in. It is extremely important to remain open to and accept help from other countries.

Unfavorable Impressions

There are many scenes that give an unfavorable impression of the Middle East. One of the very first scenes, when Saudi terrorists drive a vehicle around shooting innocent people on the street is a very powerful image. Before the shooting, the movie shows parts of a friendly softball game happening in the city. This peaceful scene soon turns to turmoil as people are running in fear from the terrorist vehicle on pace to shoot down anyone in sight. The violence, especially around peaceful families and young children, gives the Middle East a terrible image of corruption and danger.

Conclusion

I thought that *The Kingdom* was a great movie with much important content. Though the storyline might not depict the Middle East as such a great place, it gives the notion of hope for the people living there in need. The element of the movie that I thought is the most valuable is the part of how the U.S. tries to reach out and sends its own people to try to resolve problems in Saudi Arabia. This is a good example of how countries should respond to others in need. I thought watching the movie was a good and meaningful experience.